

Testimony to the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee

Re: Governor's Biennial Budget

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Buenas noches, boa noite, good evening Senator Slossberg, Senator Markley, Representative Haddad, Representative LeGeyt and other members of the Committee. My name is Mary Ann Mahony, and I am Professor of History and Latin American Studies at CCSU where I am also president of the American Association of University Professors. I come before you as a citizen, as a taxpayer, as a resident of Collinsville and as a professional to ask you to support CCSU.

I have lived in Connecticut for nineteen years. I came for graduate school, left for research and then employment and returned in 2003. I joined the CCSU faculty because the university impressed me and I wanted to be closer to family. In the last 14 years, I've taught students, carried out research, purchased a home become involved in my community. I wasn't born here, but Connecticut is now my state. In the fall, I will be proud to represent CCSU and the United States as a Fulbright Scholar.

Let me tell you about two of our recent alums:

In 2011, a young woman from Ansonia transferred to CCSU from a private university she could no longer afford. An immigrant, she is fully bilingual and excels at everything she does. But in the spring of 2012, she was taking five classes, writing her senior thesis, and due to give birth during final exams. I thought she would drop out, but she proved me wrong and graduated in December with a 3.71 GPA. She now works in this building.

Another student came to us after being accepted to Trinity and UCONN, because CCSU was less expensive, and he had seen our talented Latin dance group perform. As Treasurer of CCSU's Student Government Association he made the process for funding student clubs more transparent and professional. He graduated in 2015 with a President's Citation, given only to four students each year. He is now finishing an M.S. in Public Administration at UCONN. He is committed to remaining in-state and solving Hartford's financial problems. As an intern here in the legislature, he received a shout out on the House floor from Senator Ziobron, with whom he worked, even though he did not share her political views.

I came to know these students well because they took several classes with me and I was their academic advisor. Unfortunately, few faculty members have the luxury to develop such relationships. More than half of the CCSU faculty is part time and either hold full time jobs elsewhere or teach at multiple institutions to make ends meet. They do not have the time to develop the multi-year relationships with students that enable these young people to fully cultivate their talents.

As you work on the budget, please do everything you can to maintain CSU's budget, so that we can remain competitive, maintain our accreditations, and continue to educate the young people who will make Connecticut's future. Thank you for your efforts.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Mahony